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THE BIG STORY

Sept. ¹² 1952

9:00-9:30 P.M.

208
Production # 202
Script by Alvin Bortez
September 5, 1951

JACK WEEKS, HOUSTON CHRONICLE

THE BIG STORY - TV

JACK WEEKS. HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Sept. 5, 1952

CAST

Jack Weeks

Lieut. Ward Kintner

Mrs. Capote

Druggist

Iceman

Harold Kimball

Claude Tilman

Cop

THE BIG STORY

JACK WEEKS. HOUSTON (TEXAS) CHRONICLE

1. (F) PELL MELL PACK ZOOMS UP
TO CU. TITLE, "BIG STORY"
DROPS OVER PACK

CHAPPELL

PELL MELL FAMOUS CIGARETTES,
present....."THE BIG STORY".

MUSIC: BEHIND

DISSOLVE TO:

2. (L) CU OF AN ICE PICK PLUNGING
INTO A CAKE OF ICE. PULL BACK
TO SHOW ICEMAN WORKING ON THE
CAKE WHICH IS ON A LOADING PLAT-
FORM OF AN ICE HOUSE. SMALL
SIGN ON POST READS.....ICE
TRUCKS LOAD HERE.

WE PULL BACK EVEN MORE AS HAROLD
AND CLAUDE SAUNTER INTO THE FRAME
UP A SORT OF ALLEY WHICH RUNS
ALONGSIDE THE PLATFORM. THEY
STOP AND WATCH THE ICEMAN MUCH IN
THE MANNER OF SIDEWALK SUPERIN-
TENDENTS. THE ICEMAN PLUNGES THE
PICK INTO THE WOODEN PLATFORM AND
IT SHUDDERS AS IT DIGS INTO THE
WOOD. THE ICEMAN LIFTS PART OF
THE CAKE TO HIS SHOULDER AND
TURNING...SEES THE TWO MEN.

ICEMAN

Hello, boys. (CLAUDE LIFTS HIS HAND
IN GREETING) How'd it go today?

HAROLD

(SPEAKS SLOW...DELIBERATE)

All right...thank you.

ICEMAN

They'll fix you two up. Don't worry. That hospital's a fine place. (HE STARTS OFF) Well, see you tomorrow. (HE GOES OUT OF THE FRAME AND HAROLD AND CLAUDE SEEM TO START OFF AS WE DOLLY PAST THEM AND COME IN ON THE ICE PICK. WE HAVE IT IN CU WHEN A HAND REACHES INTO THE FRAME AND TAKES IT.

CUT TO ICEMAN PUTTING HIS ICE DOWN ON THE TAIL OF A SMALL TRUCK. (THIS CAN BE A SMALL MOCKUP.... JUST THE EDGE OF THE TRUCK)

CUT TO LOADING PLATFORM AS HE COMES BACK. HE REACHES FOR THE PICK TO FURTHER DEMOLISH THE CAKE OF ICE, BUT HIS HAND GRABS ONLY AIR. HE LOOKS FOR IT...IS PUZZLED...

ICEMAN

(TO NO ONE IN PARTICULAR)

Hey...who swiped my pick.

(IF SET IS SO CONSTRUCTED...CUT TO FAR END OF ALLEY AS HAROLD AND CLAUDE ARE WALKING UP TO US. AS THEY WALK INTO CAMERA.....

DISSOLVE TO:

3. (F) GENERAL SHOTS, HOUSTON, TEXAS.

CHAPPELL

Houston, Texas. The story you are about to see actually happened.

It happened in Houston, Texas. It is authentic and is offered as a

tribute to the great American news-

DISSOLVE TO:

4. (F) THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE
BUILDING

CHAPPELL (CONT'D)

DISSOLVE TO

5. (L) THE CITY ROOM.

JACK IS AT HIS DESK. HE TAKES
OUT A FLIMSY FROM HIS MACHINE..
HANDS IT TO A PASSING COPY BOY
AND GETS UP TO COME AROUND HIS
DESK TO US, PICKING UP A STACK
OF CLIPS.

The Houston Chronicle.

And tonight, to Jack Weeks of the
Houston Chronicle for his Big
Story, the makers of PELL MELL
FAMOUS CIGARETTES are proud to
have presented the PELL MELL five
Hundred Dollar award.

JACK

You work on a newspaper and a
story happens. You write it...
forget it. That's how it was
for me...until this story
came along. It's about a man
I'd never met...didn't know
his name, what he looked like.
A man who scared a city like
a plague. But writing about
him day after day...I felt I'd
known him for years. I named
him the Match Box Bandit...
called him clever, daring,
brutal. I wrote everything
except the fact that one day..
he would have to be called...
murderer. (FLIPS THE CLIPS)
Here's how it happened...this
is the story...just as I wrote

JACK (CONT'D)

it for my paper, the Houston
Chronicle.

CUT TO

6 (L) BIG STORY. TITLE CARD

MUSICAL BRIDGE

6A (F) OPENING COMMERCIAL

FADE IN

7

(L) A DRUGGIST WORKING IN HIS STORE. WE COME IN ON HIM AND FIND HIM TO BE A PLEASANT MAN, HUMMING A LITTLE TUNE TO HIMSELF AS HE UNPACKS SOME STOCK. HE PICKS UP THE PHONE..... ANSWERING A CALL. HE TALKS TO THE PERSON WORDLESSLY. HE IS ABOUT FIFTY.

NARR.

It's all in the file, Jack Weeks. The time and place where it all started.....this terrible thing you knew had to happen. A pleasant afternoon in early Spring. A corner drugstore in the East End of Houston. Nothing could stop it...nothing.

DRUGGIST

I wouldn't worry, Mrs. Stein. He'll be all right. I'll get the prescription right over to you...of course. He'll be fine...(LISTENS AGAIN)..... Goodbye, Mrs. Stein. (HE HANGS UP AND GOES BEHIND THE PRESCRIPTION COUNTER TO MIX SOMETHING FROM SOME BOTTLES.

CUT TO THE BOTTOM HALF OF DOOR AS IT OPENS AND A MAN'S LEGS ENTER. CAMERA MOVES IN AHEAD OF HIM AND TOWARD THE COUNTER AS HE IS RIGHT IN BACK OF IT WALKING. THE DRUGGIST LOOKS THRU THE GLASS OF HIS PRESCRIPTION COUNTER TO SEE IF IT'S A FAMILIAR FACE.

I'll be right with you, sir.

(CAMERA PROCEEDS RIGHT UP TO THE COUNTER AND A MOMENT LATER THE DRUGGIST COMES UP)

Yes sir.....

VOICE (O.S. SLOW DELIBERATE
AS IF EVERY WORD IS CARE-
FULLY CHOSEN)

A box of matches, please.

DRUGGIST

(EXPRESSION ON FACE .. "SOME BIG SALE")

Box of matches.

{DRUGGIST LEANS UNDER COUNTER AND PUTS
A BOX OF MATCHES ON COUNTER. MAN'S
HAND LAYS DOWN A QUARTER. DRUGGIST
TAKES IT, RINGS OPEN THE REGISTER.
MAN PICKS UP THE MATCHES.

TIGHT SHOT ON DRUGGIST AS HE OFFERS
THE CHANGE. HE FREEZES.

CUT TO CU OF ICE PICK HELD
THREATENINGLY IN MAN'S HAND.

VOICE (STILL DELIBERATE)

Don't make any mistakes. Empty
out that drawer.

DRUGGIST (A BRAVE GUY)

You're the one who's making the
mistake.

VOICE

You haven't much time.

DRUGGIST

Mister, a lot of poor people
around here. I don't make very
much. I wish you'd...(SUDDENLY
HE GRABS FOR THE MAN'S WRIST.

STAY TIGHT ON THEIR HANDS AS
THEY STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL. THEN CUT
TIGHT ON THE DRUGGIST AS HIS FACE
SHOWS THE STRAIN...HE'S LOSING THEN
HIS FACE CONTORTS WITH PAIN...AS IF
HE'S BEEN STABBED.

CUT WIDE AS CAMERA BACKS AWAY FROM HIM , STOPS. THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES.

8. (F) MED LONG SHOT FROM ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE STORE AS WE SEE THE MAN FLEEING DOWN THE STREET.

9. (L) INT. OF THE STORE AS THE DRUGGIST STAGGERS TO THE DOOR HOLDING HIS FACE.

DRUGGIST

Help.....help...(HE REACHES FOR THE DOOR FRAME...THEN SLIDES DOWN TO THE FLOOR.)

(CLOSE ON HIS BODY LYING GROTESQUELY ON THE FLOOR) (PAN TO CU OF THE ICE PICK ALSO ON THE FLOOR)

DISSOLVE TO

10. (F) WEEKS DRIVING IN HIS CAR.

NARR.

HE PULLS UP OUTSIDE THE STORE. GETS OUT.....

WALKS ACROSS THE SIDEWALK RAPIDLY. CURIOUS PEOPLE OUTSIDE.

ENTERS STORE.

11. (L) INT. OF THE STORE. LT. KINTNER IS DIRECTING A MAN WHO IS TAKING FLASH PIX.

(KINTNER SEES JACK LOOKING AT BODY NOW COVERED BY SHEET)

KINTNER

Okay, so what do you see?

You're at your desk when the news comes in. But you don't stay there long. You know this is it. The Match Box Bandit had been terrorizing the East End of Houston for weeks. Now...the lid was going to blow off. Newspaper editorials...citizen's committees. political speeches. All symptoms of a frightened city. All of them coming down hard on the cop in charge...Lieutenant Ward Kintner.

JACK (COMES OVER)

I figure one guy.

KINTNER

Yeah.

JACK

Our friend who plays with
matches.

KINTNER

Look, Weeks, you wrote enough
about that guy. Forget him
for once.

JACK

Where's the weapon?

KINTNER

I've got it.

JACK

What was it?

KINTNER

(LOOKS AT HIM THEN ALMOST
SIGHS. HE TURNS TO THE MAN
TAKING THE FLASH PIX)

Harry. (MAN LOOKS UP) Show
him.

(THE MAN PUTS DOWN HIS CAMERA AND
OPENS A PAPER BOX. JACK LOOKS IN.

TAKE CU OF THE ICE PICK IN THE BOX).

JACK

(TURNS TO KINTNER)

Don't tell me that doesn't
fit. His trade mark. In
every one of his holdups
an ice pick.

KINTNER

Lots of people read the papers. Someone else could have gotten an idea.

JACK

This is him. No one else. Sooner or later it had to happen. Someday, someone was going to stand up to him... not be scared.

KINTNER

I'm still saying it. He's not the only crook in Houston.

JACK

(LOOKING AROUND, HE GOES TO THE COUNTER)

Cash drawer open. (SEES MATCHES ON THE COUNTER) Box of matches. (PICKS THEM UP) Lieutenant, he left you a road map. Everything but tell you his name.

KINTNER

Nice of you to come here. Show me around.

JACK

Anyone else in the store with him?

(INDICATING THE BODY)

KINTNER

Why?

JACK

Something else that fits. A
storekeeper alone....the East
End neighborhood...crook comes
in...orders box of matches.....

KINTNER (ALMOST A HINT
OF DESPERATION)

Weeks, you think I'm blind...I
don't know who did this. Sure..
it's your guy. You named him
but I'm stuck with him.

JACK

Lieutenant...

KINTNER

This killing. It's bad as they
come. But that it has to be him
who did it... They'll be burning
me now like I murdered my own
grandmother.

JACK

I'm calling it in, Lieutenant.
(HE HEADS FOR THE PHONE BOOTH)

KINTNER

Weeks. (JACK STOPS...WAITS)
Just facts, huh?

JACK (HALF SMILES)

It's okay, Lieutenant. I know
you're crazy about your grand-
mother. (HE GOES INTO THE BOOTH
...CLOSES DOOR AND DIALS. WE
STAY WITH KINTNER)

KINTNER (TO HIS ASST.)

Wrap it up here, Harry. (HE
SURVEYS THE SCENE AGAIN AS A
COP COMES IN...A TERRIBLE HURRY)

COP

Lieutenant..

KINTNER (TURNS)

Yeah.

COP

I think we got him.

KINTNER

Who?

COP

Lady across the street saw a guy
run out of here. Spotted him
going into a house around the
corner. Sheridan's watching it
right now.

KINTNER

Com on...(HE GOES OUT FAST AND
COP FOLLOWS. JACK LOOKS OUT FROM
THE PHONE BOOTH. HE OPENS THE
DOOR)

JACK

Hey, where you going? (BUT KINTNER
IS GONE. JACK TO PHONE) Call you back.
(HE TOO STARTS RUNNING OUT)

DISSOLVE TO:

12. (F) MED SHOT OF A PLAIN HOUSE.
POLICE CAR DRAWS UP IN FRONT
AND COP RUNS OUT FROM DOORWAY TO
OPEN THE DOOR. OUT COMES KINTNER
AND HE STARTS ISSUING ORDERS.
COPS SPREAD AROUND ALL SIDES OF
THE HOUSE. AS KINTNER STARTS
GOING UP THE FRONT STEPS WITH
DRAWN GUN,

CUT TO CLOSE SHOT OF JACK'S CAR
PULLING UP AND BREAKING FAST.
HE JUMPS OUT, BUT KINTNER HAS
ALREADY GONE INTO THE HOUSE.
JACK RACES UP THE STEPS AND
INTO THE HOUSE.

13. (L) INT. OF SIMPLE HOME. MRS.
CAPOTE IS ON THE COUCH...NUMB
WITH TERROR. JACK COMES IN AND
SEES JUST A COP WITH HER.

JACK

Where's the Lieutenant Kintner.

COP

Out back.

MRS. CAPOTE (ALMOST A MOAN)

He was going to kill me.....

(KINTNER COMES STRIDING IN FROM THE
REAR OF THE HOUSE.)

KINTNER

No sign of him.

MRS. CAPOTE (TO ALL OF THEM)

He opened the door and ran in. I
didn't even know what was happening.

COP (ASIDE TO KINTNER)

Name's Mrs. Capote. Lives here
alone.

KINTNER (TO HER)

How'd he get out?

MRS. CAPOTE

Through the back door. He saw
a policeman on the sidewalk..
He warned me...said he'd kill
me.

JACK

Lieutenant...she can identify
him. The first person who's
really seen him, face to face.

MRS. CAPOTE

Why didn't I lock the door? I
should have locked the door.

KINTNER

Mrs. Capote...

MRS. CAPOTE (TO EACH ONE
SEPARATELY)

I've always been afraid of people
breaking in. I don't know what was
the matter with me.

KINTNER (TINGE OF IMPATIENCE
BUT POLITE)

Will you describe him, please?
There's a chance he might still
be in the neighborhood.

MRS. CAPOTE

He said he'd killed a man. If
I did anything...he'd kill me.

(KINTNER TURNS AWAY. EVERYTHING IS
WORKING BAD...AND HE'S DOWN)

JACK

Mrs. Capote...the police need
your help. They need it bad.
You can help them find this man.

MRS. CAPOTE

It was happening and I didn't
believe it. I heard his voice
...I heard what he said...but
his face...it's hard to remember.

JACK

Try, Mrs. Capote. Try...

MRS. CAPOTE

No. I can't.

JACK

If you saw him again. (SHE LOOKS
UP) You'd be able to point him
out, wouldn't you? He was only a
few feet away....right next to you.

KINTNER

Look, Weeks.....

JACK

You'd know him then, wouldn't
you? Wouldn't you?

(SHE NODS)

MRS. CAPOTE

I'd...I'd know him.

JACK

Prints on that ice pick and a
lineup for her to choose from..
You're making time.

KINTNER

Correction. Prints on the
pick...all smudged. As for an
identification...

MRS. CAPOTE (AGAIN TO
ALL OF THEM)

How could I forget to lock the
door.

KINTNER

(THROWS WEEKS A "SEE WHAT I MEAN"
LOOK) (NOW TO THE COP)

Roy, you stay here with Mrs.
Capote, 'til I phone for her.

We're going downtown and
arrange a little show. A line-
up like this town never saw.

(TO JACK) You come along, Weeks.
Always saying how well you think
you know this guy. Maybe you can
pick him out too. (HE GOES OUT
AND JACK FOLLOWS. CLOSE ON MRS.
CAPOTE WHO SLOWLY SHAKES HER HEAD)

MRS. CAPOTE

Why my house? All the others
on this block. Why my house?

DISSOLVE TO:

14. (L) LINEUP PLATFORM. BRIGHT
LIGHTS FOCUSED ON A WHITE
BACKGROUND. HEIGHT CHARTS
FROM THE BACKDROP FOR THE MEN
TO STAND AGAINST. A MAN
TRUDGES UP THE STAGE..TURNS
SLOWLY TO FACE US.

COME IN ON HIM

NARR.

The big parade...the lineup...the
show...dozens of catchy names for
it. To you, Jack Weeks, it's

just a room where a piece of the

NARR. (CONT'D)

city passes through. Unhappy...
miserable. But this time, you're
here for a grim purpose. Will the
one person who can do it...pick
out a murderer?

CUT TO MRS. CAPOTE SITTING IN
BACK OF THE ROOM NEAR A SMALL
DESK WITH A LIGHT OVER IT.
WE SEE THE LIEUT. AND JACK NEAR
HER. SHE SLOWLY SHAKES NO.

CUT TO ANOTHER MAN TAKING THE
PLATFORM.

CUT TO MRS. CAPOTE. SHE
SLOWLY SHAKES NO.

CUT TO ANOTHER MAN TAKING THE
PLATFORM.

CUT TO MRS. CAPOTE. SHE AGAIN
SHAKES NO SLOWLY.

KINTNER

Mrs. Capote...you've been
here over two hours. Wasn't it
any of those men?

MRS. CAPOTE

No. Look Lieutenant...I'd like
to go home. What I've been
through...

KINTNER

I know, M'am. Let's try just a
little longer. All right, Roy..

(CUT TO THE PLATFORM. A TEEN AGE BOY
COMES ON)